

Utah 911 Committee Inaugural Meeting

Thursday October 28th

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Utah Department of Public Safety

4501 S. 2700 West

Taylorsville, Ut

1st floor UHP Large Conference room

This handout was generated by Chuck McCown.

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Allegations from anecdotal sources (see two examples attached)

- Wireline and Wireless Funds NOT Accounted for Separately
- Carryforward of Funds NOT Accounted For
- Items Purchased that are NOT Authorized by Statute
- Misuse of Funds
- Funds Not Used as the Legislature Intended

Allowable Expenses

- Acquisition, Implementation & Maintenance of PSAP equipment necessary to add the "E" to 911.
- E-911 Equipment & Service Features
- Database Administration Expense
- Database Access Expense
- E-911 Tandem Access Expense
- Energy expenses including back up power expense for the equipment involved in the ANI/ALI database queries.

Non-Allowable Expenses

- General back-up power systems.
- Radio system expense.
- County MSAG and GIS related expenses.
- Any cost for emergency response (including dispatcher expense)
- Any cost for vehicles.
- Constructing, leasing, maintaining, or renovating a building

Starting Recommendations:

- Separate Accounting Records be Kept for Wireline and Wireless Funds - Separate Budgets
- Reimburse the E-911 Funds for Items Purchased
- Reimburse the E-911 Funds for Misuse of Grant Funds and Legislative Appropriations
- Generation of uniform system of accounts for the counties

Proposed Audit Steps

- Request from E-911 Committee
- Pre Audit Conference with County
- Field Work by (DPU, AG, Tax)
- Verification
- Post Audit Conference
- Report Generation

Redirected Funds

Over the last three fiscal years, the District of Columbia has used more than \$9 million in E-911 funds "for unspecified personnel expenses of the police department," according to the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association (CTIA).

California redirected \$50 million from its E-911 pool in 2001. Texas took \$40 million for other state programs in 2001. Virginia took \$30 million in 2002. Maryland, North Carolina and South Carolina have all raided millions of dollars from E-911 funds.

Perhaps the most egregious example is New York where, which has collected a "911 tax" from wireless customers for 10 years, but has not upgraded a single computer to receive location information.

Recently, New York auditors found that the surcharge money has instead been used for a range of state police activities, including purchasing radio communication systems, microwave communications equipment and maintaining radio equipment. Auditors also found the money has been used for dry cleaning, lawn-mowing services and travel expenses.¹

June 18, 2004

Kalkaska 911 review shows need for audit

Where there's smoke there's usually enough heat to generate a flame.

Such is the case with the operation of the 911 emergency system in Kalkaska County.

There are enough questions about the sheriff's department's management of the 911 service to warrant a formal - and neutral - financial audit.

Last year, a dispatcher who was fired from her position sued to get her job back. She made serious operational and financial allegations about the sheriff's office.

She said she was terminated because she raised questions to her supervisors about the system's finances and operations.

¹ http://www.govtech.net/?pg=magazine/sup_story&id=29379&magid=17&issue=11:2002 Wednesday, October 27, 2004

Among the charges in her suit were that 911 surcharge funds were misused, that dispatchers are forced to work as clerks at the sheriff's department, that a sheriff's road patrol sergeant is paid an annual salary from the dispatch budget and that dispatchers, when working alone, are forced to abandon the phones when taking a break.

The suit is pending and, curiously, one of the county's legal strategies has been to block public release of information gleaned through the discovery process.

Most recently, a state review board gave the department a tepid report on its 911 operating procedures.

The Emergency Telephone Services Committee, a group composed of public safety and government officials and private sector representatives, said it found no evidence of misuse of funds.

Reviewers, however, did fault the sheriff's department for failing to account "for revenue and/or expenditures in a way that clearly shows what function the money was spent on and what the real costs of 911 operations are." The reviewers further called for the implementation of "basic accounting principles."

Because of statutory limitations, the review was limited to specific aspects of the 911 system's operation. Not all of the complaints of the fired employee were evaluated. In other allegations, reviewers, while not expressly agreeing with the ex-dispatcher, did make recommendations for system improvements.

Neither side in the issue can take comfort in the blandness of the state committee's report.

But residents and taxpayers in Kankaska County are entitled to know whether their emergency services money is being used correctly and whether a public employee can be fired for speaking up when shortcomings are detected.

A detailed financial audit would provide answers to some questions. And it's up to the court to sort out the rest - just as it did when the county's lawyer unsuccessfully tried to keep documents related to the case secret.²

² <http://www.record-eagle.com/2004/jun/061804.htm> Wednesday, October 27, 2004